

Administrator's Update for 3/30/11

By Ray Sandrock, County Administrator

Last week the Charlotte County Board of Commissioners approved the land swap between Southwest Land Developers and Charlotte County. Southwest will receive a portion of Murdock Village raw acreage and in return the County will receive shovel-ready property near the Punta Gorda Airport. This is a great stride towards bringing in more businesses and boosting the local economy.

Stillwater Home

The operational partnership for the Stillwater Home in Port Charlotte was also approved last week at the Board of County Commissioners meeting. The Stillwater Home building is owned by the County and was reconstructed to house up to 18 individuals. A faith-based group, originating from the Peace Lutheran Church in Port Charlotte, will operate this facility as a transitional congregate living facility that will house young adults age 18 to 26. The group will offer housing as well as case management, life skills training, employment assistance and assistance in seeking educational opportunities assisting in permanent employment in the community. Residents will be required to pay rent for their housing when able.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program

The Board of County Commissioners also approved the grant agreement with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Neighborhood Stabilization III program. Focused in the medical district community redevelopment area of Port Charlotte, this grant is established for the acquisition of and rehabilitation of foreclosed properties to be then made available for low to moderate income households. The grant, in the amount of \$2,022,962, will also provide funds for demolition of abandoned properties and new construction in this same area of the County.

Cooling Vests

Our Charlotte County Fire/EMS division now has cooling vests to use for firefighter rehab. During an extended incident, firefighters that have been in the "hot zone" for a period of time need to lower their body core temperature and heart rate back to safe levels before continuing to assist in the incident. This process is called rehab. The vests are worn during rehab and are hooked up to a water and ice system which pumps cool water through the vest to help cool the firefighter's body core temperature. This system will help get firefighters through rehab faster and back out to the incident in a shorter amount of time.

Manasota Key

In response to a request from the Manasota Key MSBU Advisory Committee for drainage improvements to keep the main roads on the Key passable during a rain event, drainage infrastructure was installed along Gulf Boulevard from Beach Drive to Holiday Drive in South Manasota Key. This project included installation of three vortex separators at the new outfalls to prevent floatables from discharging into Lemon Bay and installation of flaps to check backflow into the discharge pipes and stop high tides from backing up onto the streets. Construction is almost complete and clean-up has begun.

Dogs in Parks

Our Charlotte County community services department recently held two public meetings to discuss allowing leashed dogs in designated areas in nine park locations. The idea was well received by over forty people that attended the meetings. The public is encouraged to voice their opinion on the plan by completing an online survey, available at our website www.CharlotteCountyFL.com. Select "Community Services" from the drop-down list. The survey will be available until April 3.

Kayak and Wildlife Festival

Our Port Charlotte Beach Park hosted the ninth annual Kayak and Wildlife Festival earlier this month with approximately 350 attendees. The event featured ten speakers presenting various subjects from kayaking to wildlife to art. Fishing clinics, a fishing tournament and a cardboard boat race were held specifically for children.